

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 USIA-15 /035 W

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P R 291823Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8559

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, UI

SUBJECT: CLASS ONE EXHIBIT AT BIRMINGHAM OFFSHORE

INTERNATIONAL - DECEMBER 1976

REF: USDOC 19335

SUMMARY:

EMBASSY STRONGLY RE-ENDORSES BIRMINGHAM AS BEST LOCATION FOR TYPE ONE USDOC EXHIBIT IN DECEMBER 1976. BIRMINGHAM'S ADVANTAGES OVER RIVAL OLYMPIA (LONDON) BASED "WORLD OFFSHORE" (ARGUMENTS GIVEN BELOW) SEEM CONVINCING. END SUMMARY

1. AFTER A THOROUGH EXAMINATION INCLUDING LENGTHY PRESENTATIONS TO THE EMBASSY BY ORGANIZERS OF BOTH EVENTS, EMBASSY IS CONVINCED THAT, OF THE TWO "RIVAL" U.K. OFFSHORE EXHIBITS - LONDON'S WORLD OFFSHORE, AND BIRMINGHAM'S OFFSHORE INTERNATIONAL - LATTER IS THE APPROPRIATE VENUE FOR A TYPE ONE EXHIBITION.

2. PRINCIPLE ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF BIRMINGHAM ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A. PREMISES AND LOCATION:

BIRMINGHAM'S NATIONAL EXHIBITION CENTER FULLY LIVES UP TO CLAIM AS PERHAPS EUROPE'S MOST MODERN AND COMPLETE. CENTER COMPRISES 2 HOTELS (WITH 1200 ROOMS), CONFERENCE FACILITIES AND HOSPITALITY CENTERS, A FIVE PLATFORM
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RAILWAY STATIMN ON MAIN LINES FROM LONDON (ONLY 70

MINUTES AWAY) AND ALL REGIONAL CENTERS, AN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ALONGSIDE (CAPABLE OF RECEIVING ALL BUT JUMBO-JET AIRCRAFT), SHOPS, BANKS, RESTAURANTS, PARKING FOR 15000 CARS AND 200 BUSES. ALL THIS IS IN SHARP CONTRAST WITH OLYMPIA, WHICH IS JUSTIFIABLY CRITICISED FOR LACKING ANY OF ALL OF SIMILAR FACILITIES, AND IS DANK, DREARY AND CHILLY. EMBASSY FEELS THAT EXCELLENCE OF TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES, INCLUDING NUMEROUS CHARTER FLIGHTS TO BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, PLUS SPECIAL CHEAP EVENING TRAINS TO AND FROM LONDON, LARGELY OFFSET OLYMPIA MANAGEMENT'S ARGUMENTS RE ADVANTAGER OF LONDON FROM LOCATIONAL VIEW POINT. FURTHER-MORE BIRMINGHAM IS IN HEARTLAND OF U.K. MANUFACTURING AND ENGINEERING AREA.

B. MANAGEMENT:

OFFSHORE INTERNATIONAL'S MANAGEMENT, INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIRS HOLDINGS LTD (ITF) IS U.K.'S MOST EXPERIENCED ORGANISING GROUP AND HAS SPONSORED OFFICIAL FAIRS THROUGHOUT WOPLD. ORGANIZERS OF OLYMPIA'S "WORLD OFFSHORE", THOUGH EXPERIENCED (AS OFFSHOOT OF ITF) DO NOT APPEAR TO HAVE RESOURCES AND BACKING OF RIVALS.

C. SUPPORT:

ALTHOUGH HMG HAS WAFFLED SOMEWHAT ON ISSUE, APPEARS THAT OVERWHELMING U.K. PRESENCE WILL BE AT BIRMINGHAM WITH ONLY MINISCULE BOOTH AT OLYMPIA AS TOKEN. WHEREAS

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INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8560

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FRG, SWEDEN, HUNGARY AND POLAND ARE ALL MOUNTING OFFICIAL EXHIBITS TO BIRMINGHAM (AND BELGIUM. IRELAND AND MOST OF DUTCH BUSINESSES LEANING TOWARDS BIRMINGHAM) OLYMPIA CAN BOAST ONLY SOME PROVINCIAL CANADIAN EXHIBITS (MINUS ONTARIO WHICH OPTING FOR BIRMINGHAM) AND, POSSIBLY BELGIAN SUPPORT (UNDERSTAND CANADA, FRANCE AND NORWAY ARE OPTING OUT OF EITHER EXHIBIT). OPINION IN SCOTLAND APPEARS STRONGLY DISPOSED TOWARDS BIRMINGHAM. WHILE HMG HAS NOT APPROACHED EMBASSY LONDON, U.S. CHOICE OF OLYMPIA WOULD LIKELY CAUSE SOME OFFICIAL DISCOMFORT. OUR OPINION ON THIS SHARED BY GERMANS AND DUTCH.

BIGGEST QUESTION MARK IS WHICH EXHIBIT BULK OF LEADING U.S. SUPPLIERS WILL CHOOSE. ACCORDING TO INFORMAL EMBASSY POLL THERE IS SOME DIVISION OF OPINION WITH MAJORITY SITTING ON FENCE. SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF LONDON-BASED INTERNATIONAL OIL AND SUPPLY COMPANIES PREFER LONDON AS LOCALE, BUT DISLIKE OLYMPIA. DECISION, IN MANY CASES, WILL BE STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY CHOICE OF USG ON MATTER. WE BELIEVE THAT OUR DECISION WILL IN FACT LEAD MANY COMPANIES TO CHOOSE BIRMINGHAM. THOUGH A HARDCORE OF SUPPORT FOR LONDON WILL PROBABLY REMAIN.

D. TIMING:

OCTOBER TIMING MAY WORK TO ADVANTAGE OF OLYMPIA IN THE SHORT RUN, BUT BIRMINGHAM SHOW MORE LIKELY TO COINCIDE WITH GENERAL U.K. ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND CONCURRENT ROUND UNCLASSIFIED

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OF NEW EQUIPMENT ORDERS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NEW FIELDS.

E. CONCLUSION:

SHORT OF MERGER OF THE TWO EXHIBITS WHICH WOULD RAISE VERY COMPLEX PROBLEMS RE RENTAL PLUS OTHER COMMITMENTS, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT BOTH SHOWS WILL TAKE PLACE AS SCHEDULED. OUR POLL SUGGESTS THAT FEW IF ANY COMPANIES WILL CHOOSE BOTH, AND SOME MAY DECIDE TO STAY AWAY FROM EITHER ON GROUNDS THAT OFFSHORE SHOWS WORLDWIDE ARE ALREADY AT SATURATION POINT. OUR BEST ESTIMATE HOWEVER IS THAT MOST MAJOR FIRMS WILL OPT FOR THE MORE PRESTIGIOUS SHOW (BIRMINGHAM). THERE WE HAVE ALL CONDITIONS TO MOUNT AN EXCEPTIONALLY EFFECTIVE AND COMMERCIALY REWARDING EXHIBIT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LONDON01495
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760034-0605
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760110/aaaaaiew.tel
Line Count: 164
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 JUN 2004 by barnescd>; APPROVED <26 JAN 2005 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CLASS ONE EXHIBIT AT BIRMINGHAM OFFSHORE INTERNATIONAL - DECEMBER 1976
TAGS: BEXP, UK
To: COM
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006